

Steering Committee Meeting July 10, 2006

Members Present: Governor Chris Gregoire, Representative Glenn Anderson, Frank Armijo, Dr. Terry Bergeson, Charley Bingham, Amy Bragdon, Representative Bill Fromhold, Denny Heck, Eric Liu, Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, Victor Moore, Senator Dave Schmidt, Bob Watt.

Governor Gregoire convened the meeting of the **Washington Learns** Steering Committee at 11:00 am on July 10th, 2006. The Governor stated that the purpose of the meeting was to hear a report out from the Advisory Committee Chairs on the three to five “Big Ideas” and provide the chairs with feedback. The Governor further stated that the Steering Committee must show the public that the education system is accountable. She cautioned the committee that the public has the mindset that not every dollar is being spent as wisely as it could be and that the education system must get the best return on its investment.

Ann Daley, Executive Director of Washington Learns, gave a presentation to the committee on seamlessness. Ms. Daley reminded the Steering Committee that they have the unique perspective to focus on the transitions in the whole system. The SC’s charge is to align programs, customize learning so that students progress at their own pace, create a transparent system, shared responsibility and accountability of results across the sectors. For further details on Ms. Daley’s presentation see www.washingtonlearns.gov. The following comments were made in response to Ann Daley’s opening presentation that introduced the P-20 Council idea.

- Could the P-20 Council have a legislative function? Currently the legislature passes laws without filter.
- Is the P-20 Council just creating a 345th board? Is there another way to take on governance (e.g. the state board)? Can we streamline the boards we already have?
- It was further noted by the committee that the debate was not about the number of boards or districts, but achieving seamlessness between sectors.

It was noted that the idea behind the P-20 Council was to deal with accountability across the system. It was also acknowledged that there is a lack of communication across sectors currently and a P-20 Council would address this. Governor Gregoire asked for volunteers from the SC to form an interim workgroup to discuss the topic of governance.

Before the presentations began a member of the committee pointed out that the Advisory Committee proposals failed to address the issue of efficiency and accountability, although they were tasked to do so. It was noted the efficiency and accountability should be added as part of the discussion.

First, Chair of the K-12 Committee Terry Bergeson gave a presentation entitled “Washington Learns: Stronger Foundations and Bridges help children transition from Pre-K to K-12 and to

higher education and work” on behalf of the K-12 committee. For a copy of the presentation see www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov. The K-12 Committee proposed four “big ideas”:

Recommendation #1: Redefine the constitutional definition of “Basic Education” to be based on the four student learning goals in HB 1209 and five measurable system goals adopted by the K-12 Advisory Committee and reaffirm that the state is responsible for funding this definition of basic education. Comments included:

- Please include relationships—rigor and relevance appear to be included.
- How can we measure the goals in the future—we need data and goals for each benchmark and indicator.
- Where is the evidence that teachers are not prepared to teach math—what classes need to be taught?
- Concerns was raised permitting differentiation by ethnicity—might lead to differentiation of segregation prohibited by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- Where is the evidence that better prepared math teachers would better help students?
- Assessing students in kindergarten is too late—there needs to be assessment and parent outreach no later than age three or four (like the federal child find program).

Recommendation #2: Reengineer and personalize our schools based on research-driven and evidence-based investments. Comments included:

- Indicate which recommendations need legislative funding, which need policy changes, which are governed by federal law.
- All schools should be engaging in best practices, not just struggling schools.
- Report is missing looking at time: how the school day and school year should be restructured.
- Look at technology and how it could be used to personalize education—there might be a way of having an ala carte approach to teaching. Also, look to technology to help struggling students and to challenge students who want to soar.
- The 180-day school year is too short, we need to look at an extended school year if we are to meet our goals.
- The State Board should be in charge of accountability and concern about any suggestion that the “state” should take over schools.
- Look at using existing resources: I-728 should be used to reduce class size.

Recommendation #3: Restructure our system of educator development and compensation to attract, prepare, retool and retain world class, culturally competent and diverse teachers and educational leaders.

- Did not see recommendation regarding how teachers should be compensated for actual performance.

- Need more professional development. Terry stated that this did not get into the PowerPoint, but they were recommended 10 days (8 additional) for professional development.
- Wants to create specialists within teaching.
- We should go beyond colleges of education in preparing teachers.
- Principals should be emphasized separately—so the specific goals for principals are intentional.
- Support institute idea articulated by Dr. Bergeson.
- Look at concept of pre-service improvement outside of the higher education system.

Recommendation Implement #4: Realign curriculum and instructional supports to grade-level expectations and rigorous graduation requirements.

- How do the concepts of a state-wide aligned curriculum and a personalized education work together and not be in conflict?
- We need more partnerships with businesses and community and on-the-job experience, students need to know why they should take more rigorous courses, students need to know about their CTC options.
- Students need more arts education; we need to know how to come the “creativity state.” How do we inject/cultivate creativity in the curriculum?
- We need to align the math curriculum with GLEs and the EARLS; expressed concern about some of the new trends in math education—the current approach is not working. Need to investigate and be willing to change.
- Leadership is important
- Have not yet heard enough about workforce/ apprenticeships.

Next steps: 1) Special education formula 2) Funding formulas and phase-in plan

Next, Chair Bob Watt gave the Early Learning Council presentation. He prefaced his presentation by stating that the Early Learning Council proposes major shifts in thinking about education. The ELC vision is that by age four, children will be in voluntary taxpayer-supported, full-day, full-year early learning. In addition, special needs must be recognized & responded to early. For a copy of the presentation see www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov. The ELC proposed five big ideas.

Recommendation #1: Support Parents as their child’s first and best teacher.

Recommendation #2: Refocus and change public perception about education for children birth through age ten. Comments included:

- Feedback underscored the importance of the “learning to learn idea” as a gigantic step away from seat-time.

- Is the 10 year-old threshold research based? Bob replied that 10 is when kids take the WASL and is pre-puberty for most. By age 10 all children should be self-directed learners. A further question was asked regarding the discrepancy between the K-12 (3rd grade) and the ELC (4th grade) committee's proposals. It was suggested that both sectors should agree on one age. The Governor further commented that it ought to be when you are ready.
- It was noted that WL is an opportunity to think about how to define mastery or readiness throughout grades—age bands. Must think in terms of stages, rather than grades.
- SC needs to focus on establishing an interface between EL & HE and on building bridges.

Recommendation #3: **Provide fair, sufficient and stable funding for Early Learning.**

Recommendation #4: **Support Early Educator Professional Development, Compensation and Competency.**

Recommendation #5: **Build Community-Level Capacity in Support of the "Learning to Learn" Years.** Comments included:

- The ELC was complemented on its focus on community level capacity.
- The ELC was also commended for proposing developmentally appropriate curriculum. Important to remember that developmental needs apply throughout education (pre-K and beyond).
- It was noted that we too often think about Early Learning as preschool, but all day kindergarten and childcare venues are not necessarily going to be a BA or an AA.
- The Governor mentioned that the opportunity to give current providers of daycare the tools they need on the job had not been flushed out enough. She assumes that Thrive by Five will be evidence-based and research-based. Part of the job of the Director of the Department of Early Learning will be to start a Thrive by Five in every county.

Finally, Denny Heck gave the Higher Education Presentation to the Steering Committee. For a copy of the presentation see www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov. The Higher Education Advisory Committee proposed five big ideas:

Recommendation #1: **Raise Overall Educational Attainment.** Comments included:

- What part of the discussion on *Opportunity Scholarships* was based on the ability of students to pay? Was there a discussion regarding a need based scholarship? Governor Gregoire stated that awardees must have a high school diploma to be eligible for the 13th year. This would ensure accountability in both the K-12 and Higher Education sectors.
- Are branch campuses effective in getting place bound students in the pipeline? The SC requested further county-by-county data on whether branch campuses have been effective. It was noted that we have a ways to go as Pierce and Clark County are still below the statewide average.

- Is there a Higher Education proposal regarding capital funding? Governor Gregoire stated that the capital question was legitimate and directed Victor Moore, OFM to put together a briefing document regarding the capital issue.

Recommendation #2: Provide Fair, Sufficient and Stable Funding. Commends included:

- There was support for the “hold harmless” provision.
- What constitutes stable funding in this context? Denny responded that, at the least, it meant that the state could not give institutions authority to increase tuition while simultaneously decreasing state funding.
- Has the committee discussed means-tested tuition?
- Ideas to collaborate with private entities were discussed. One suggestion was to allow private foundations to pre-purchase portions of tuition then use the purchases for targeted populations like those eligible for 21st Century Scholarships. Another idea was to recruit private businesses to contribute funding for high demand degrees.

Recommendation #3: Improve Articulation and Transition for Students. Comments included:

- Need review of data such as the Gates Foundation High Achieving Schools that have assisted students in applying for higher education that can often be a barrier to access and transitions.
- Need further data on dual-credit programs including how they can be integrated into a mastery-based system.
- Need to further take a look at transfer issues. Governor Gregoire inquired why the transfer criteria is different for each institution? Who sets the criteria? Should this be, could this be uniform? It was suggested that the state mandate that all lower-division courses be made transferable.
- Within this topic area, there is great opportunity for efficiency. The conversation should include an operational scheme to look at all of the transition points.

Recommendation #4: Improve Efficiency, Accountability and Governance.

- Members discussed the possibility of integrating accountability into higher education to the same extent that it has been incorporated into the K-12 system. For instance, there is currently no faculty assessment. This might be done through performance contracts.

Recommendation #5: Increase and sustain research capacity in Washington’s higher education system – There were no comments on this section.

The committee then opened up for public comment.

- Michele Anciaux Aoki commended the K-12 Committee for their recommendation regarding international education. She stated that the 13th Year proposal—providing

funding for 1st year of college at CTC level--would make a huge difference to access for 1st generation college students and for those students that cannot afford it.

- **Jule Sugerman**. As a former government manager, Mr. Sugerman spoke to the committee regarding managing change at the state, local and community level. He cautioned that the enthusiasm of WA Learns will be difficult to translate on the community level. He also cautioned against a build up of unnecessary bureaucracy.
- **Phyllis Buckner-Frank** stated that the association of curriculum and development had a poll and presented top priorities. Specifically, she spoke of the importance of modernizing the school calendar by extending the number of days that students are required to attend school.
- **Linda Hanson**, President of the WA State PTA, encouraged the Steering Committee to adopt the following priorities: elements in the evidence-based model that recognize the extra costs of teaching students who need additional resources to succeed; class size ratios proposed by the evidence-based model; the use of rolling three-day FTE average; full day kindergarten; among others. In regards to compensation, the PTA encouraged the Steering Committee to adopt the following: more competitive salary; wage premium to attract and maintain highly qualified teachers in high-needs, challenging districts; a geographically comparable wage index; better recognition of the professional experience of educational staff associations, etc.
- **Dan Steele**, WA State School Board Association, stated that the state should establish 1) high standards 2) flexibility in funding 3) and accountability for results. He argued that districts have not been provided enough flexibility and that flexibility should be part of the statewide base and relinquished only if the district is not successful in achieving goals. He cautioned WA Learns against discussing statewide interventions.
- **John Burbank**, Economic Opportunity Institute, commented on the Early Learning Council's discussion of the Career and Wage Ladder. He stated that parents are important as the child's 1st teachers and family leave insurance is important in this regard.
- **Kristie Perkins**, WA State Special Education Coalition, support an increase in special education funding with in current structure and safety net.

The committee adjourned at 4:30 p.m.